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"An opportunity did not present itself till December 2d, and I then swept for BROOKS' Comet between 5° and 17° South Declination * * * * without success. On the evening of the same day, in answer to enquiries, a telegram was received from the Melbourne Observatory giving the position for November 25.644, G. M. T., from which it was quite obvious that the search was made too far south. Cloudy weather again set in and continued for some days. Towards the close of December a very brilliant comet was reported to have been seen * * * at various places in New South Wales and Victoria; * * * this brilliant object was no other than the comet discovered by PERRINE.

"It is much to be regretted that beyond the original announcement of the discovery of this comet no further particulars were cabled to Australia. Had the elements or a few ephemeris positions been furnished in time, it is probable that some positions might have been secured."

TOTAL ECLIPSE OF AUGUST, 1896—RUSSIAN PROGRAMME.

Russian astronomers are completing their arrangements for viewing the forthcoming eclipse of the Sun. The Pulkowa Observatory will send an expedition to the Lower Amur; the Academy of Sciences has chosen Novaya Zemlya for the seat of its operations; so has the Kasan Society of Naturalists; while the Geographical Society will send the Director of the Irkutsk Meteorological Observatory, A. V. VOZNESENSKY, to the Oleminsk, on the Lena, for meteorological observations. Professor GLASENAPP and L. G. VUCHIKHOVSKY propose to go to Finland on their own account. The young Russian Astronomical Society (it was founded only in 1891) directs its chief attention to physical observations, and it will have three parties of observers, provided with photographic appliances. The chief station will be on the Lena, where the duration of the eclipse is longest; and it is proposed to photograph there the corona by SCHAEBERLE's method, with an objective of long focal length, and also to photograph, by means of two spectrographs, the spectrum of the corona, as well as the limb of the Sun, by means of a camera provided with a RUTHERFURD prism. At the second station, on the bay of the Ob, the corona will be photographed by means of several ordinary cameras; while at the third station, in the eastern part of

the Uleaborg province, to the north of Enontekis, the corona will be photographed by means of several cameras, following the movement of the Sun; and it is intended to establish a comparison between the spectrum of the corona and that of helium. The usual determinations of the duration of the eclipse will be made at the first and third stations.—*Nature*, 1896, March 26, p. 492.

ELEMENTS AND EPHEMERIS OF COMET *b* (SWIFT), 1896, BY
R. G. AITKEN.

The following elements are based on Professor HUSSEY's observations of April 16th and 17th, and my own of April 19th:

$$\begin{array}{l} T = \text{G. M. T. April } 17.7934 \\ \Omega = 177^\circ 58'.3 \\ i = 56 \quad 0.2 \\ \omega = 2 \quad 13.8 \\ q = 0.5645 \end{array} \left. \vphantom{\begin{array}{l} T \\ \Omega \\ i \\ \omega \\ q \end{array}} \right\} 1896.0$$

Residuals for the middle place (O—C):

$$\Delta\lambda \cos \beta = -5''.0; \Delta\beta = -4''.0$$

The ephemeris is printed elsewhere.

MOUNT HAMILTON, April 20, 1896.

POINT REYES LIGHT SEEN FROM MOUNT HAMILTON.

On March 23, 1896, the atmosphere to the west being very free from smoke and dust, owing to the prevalence of south and southeast winds, Point Reyes was distinctly visible over the hills south of San Francisco. It was particularly plain about sunset. The next morning, between four and five o'clock, the light was also very plainly seen, flashing at intervals of five seconds, and was fully as noticeable as any of the brightest electric lights in San Francisco. From STIELER's atlas it is found that the distance of Point Reyes from the LICK Observatory is about ninety-four miles. The sea horizon is eighty-seven miles distant at the altitude of the LICK Observatory.

The Pacific Ocean was also seen over two low places in the hills to the south of San Francisco.

C. D. PERRINE.

March 28, 1896.